

# MINING UTAH'S HERITAGE WORKBOOK NEWS



Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program

January 2001

**VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT** <http://dogm.nr.state.ut.us/>

For information about Utah's natural resources and updates on current happenings.

## About the Workbook

**Mining Utah's Heritage** was designed to address and enhance portions of the core curriculum for the fourth grade. The AMR Program staff worked with the State Office of Education in developing the workbook. The abandoned mine safety video, **Utah's Abandoned Mines: Stay Out and Stay Alive!**, has been placed in each elementary school in Utah. This swift-moving video features interviews with people involved in accidents at abandoned mines. The extensive footage of abandoned mines and their hazards is a good way to introduce the workbook to your class! Check with your media center, librarian or fellow teachers. If you cannot locate a video at your school, contact Jan Morse at (801)-538-5305.

## Why is Mining Important to You?

Mining is an integral part of your everyday life. The slogan "if it wasn't grown, it was mined" is true. Think about all the things you use everyday: your cup is either made of clay or plastics, both of which come from materials taken from the earth. Your car, telephone, computer, your lightweight mountain bike--all couldn't be made without raw materials that come from mining. Mining can't occur without some environmental impact. But today's mining operations are required to have permits which guarantee that all the adverse impacts will be cleaned up. If we are to live the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed, mining has to happen. The current mining industry is not the same industry that created the abandoned mines presenting a serious physical safety hazard to the public.

## An Unusual Rescue

People are not the only ones who can get into trouble at abandoned mines.

A team of biologists is studying desert tortoises near Leeds

in Washington County. The tortoises are fitted with tiny radio transmitters that tell their location. The researchers track the tortoises with radio receivers. Last April they followed one tortoise's radio signal to the edge of an abandoned mine shaft about 25 feet deep. Looking down, they could see the tortoise at the bottom. A rescuer rappelled down the shaft and found not one, but two tortoises. The second tortoise was one whose radio signal had been lost the previous November. It had been in the shaft for over five months! Remarkably, both tortoises were alive, although one was injured from the fall. They were given veterinary care and the uninjured tortoise was later released back into the wild.

Desert tortoises are threatened and are protected under the Endangered Species Act. This incident occurred in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, an area set aside especially for tortoises. The reserve contains a number of abandoned mines which, as this incident shows, can be hazardous to tortoises. The AMR Program had already targeted the mines for closure and had a contractor working there when the incident occurred, so the shaft could be filled promptly. Working in tortoise habitat required special protective measures, including carefully surveying work areas to ensure that no tortoises, dens, or eggs would be harmed. In all, 184 mines were closed by the East Reef project, making the world safer for both people and tortoises.

## More Information

For more information about resources you can use including field trips, websites, and videos, call or write Jan Morse, Educational Coordinator for the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program at the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, P.O. Box 145801, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801. Phone 801-538-5305, E-mail [nrogm.jmorse@state.ut.us](mailto:nrogm.jmorse@state.ut.us)

## Utah Mining Museums

Utah has a rich mining history. Approximately 205 mining districts have been active at one time or another since 1847. Remnants of these old mining districts can be seen all across the state, in the form of open abandoned mine adits, shafts, trenches, prospects and miscellaneous buildings and equipment. Though it is interesting to visit old mine sites, the safe way to see historic mining relics is to visit a museum. Several museums in Utah have preserved the mining history of the local mining districts. The table below lists some of the museums that have information on mining in Utah. Please call ahead for hours and fees, because some of the museums do have an entrance fee.

Museum	Address	Phone Number
Kennecott Visitor Center	At the edge of the copper mine so address varies.	801-252-3000
Miners' Park	8 miles west of Marysville, Utah on Bullion Canyon Road. No fees. Picnic Area.	Fishlake National Forest Richfield, Utah 435-896-4491
Utah Museum of Natural History	Presidents Circle, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah	801-581-4303
Park City Museum	528 Main Street, Park City, Utah	435-472-3009
Silver Reef Museum	3200 Wells Fargo Road, Silver Reef, Utah	435-876-2254

Western Mining and Railroad Museum	296 South Main Street, Helper, Utah	435-472-3009
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For more information on Utah Museums, contact Utah Office of Museum Services, 300 Rio Grande Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101. 1-801-533-3589 or 533-3587. Or look at the Utah Office of Museum Services Museum Directory web page at [www.dced.state.us.us/museums/directory.html](http://www.dced.state.us.us/museums/directory.html).